

STATUTE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PAULINE COOPERATORS

Brief History

“In 1908 I heard this invitation from my spiritual director: ‘Always remember: Annuerunt socii: it is necessary to seek help’ [cf. Lk. 5:7]. So I began to look after the cooperators” (Per un rinnovamento spirituale, 566).

1. The Association of Pauline Cooperators was founded in Alba (Cuneo), Italy, on 29 June 1917 by Fr. James Alberione, who envisioned it as closely connected to the religious Institute he had begun a short time earlier: the masculine branch in 1914 and the feminine branch in 1915, both of which were dedicated to fostering the Good Press. The Founder had in mind the example of St. Paul who, in his apostolic ministry, took advantage of the collaboration of many people: men, women, married couples, disciples... (cf. Rm. 16:3, 9, 21; 2 Co. 8:23; Phil. 2:25, 4:3; 1 Th. 3:2; Phlm. 1:24; Acts 19:22). In fact, the Association (in the beginning known as the “Union of Cooperators for the Good Press”) was set up under the protection of St. Paul, as can be seen in article 1 of the very brief Statute prepared by Fr. Alberione himself and approved by the Bishop of Alba, Giuseppe Francesco Re, on 29 September 1918.

2. The Association steadily developed under the guidance of the Founder, who widened the radius of the Cooperators’ actions to include the specific purposes of the other Pauline Congregations that were successively founded, extending it to the Eucharistic-Liturgical sphere (the Pious Disciples), pastoral work in parishes and dioceses (Pastorelle Sisters) and vocation work (the Apostoline Sisters).

3. Continuing the work of the Founder, the General Governments of the five Pauline Congregations—with the involvement of the Pauline Institutes of consecrated secular life, also founded by Fr. Alberione in the last years of his life—repeatedly reaffirmed the decision to promote and favor the development of the Pauline Cooperators, proceeding in a spirit of unity while at the same time respecting the spaces typical of each of Institute. In this way, the effort was made to further the reality already noted by the Founder himself: “The blessing of the Lord on this work, which is entirely his, has yielded good fruit” (cf. *Union of Cooperators for the Good Press*, 1924).

4. In line with this, an updated version of the Statute was prepared so as to integrate into the original Statute the directives of Vatican II, our Special General Chapters and long years of life and experience. It was signed by Superior General Fr. Renato Perino on 30 June 1985 and presented to the Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes on 30 November 1987. The Sacred Congregation approved the Statute on 11 March 1988, the date on which the Union became an Association and therefore authorized to live and work throughout the Catholic world.

5. In February 1990, during the 8th Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family, an Intercongregational Commission was set up to integrate the Statute even further so as to make it more open and easily applicable to all the groups of Cooperators who are connected to the above-mentioned Pauline Institutions. Thus a more organic Statute was drawn up, approved in 1992 for internal use on an *ad experimentum* basis, and was applied for several

years. During the 25th Meeting of the General Governments (January 2007), the decision was made to collect together all the experiences of the long preceding period, draw up a new Statute, and request its approval of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. This Statute, common to the Cooperators of all the Congregations and Institutes of the Pauline Family, would then be supplemented by Directories and Rules specific to each Institution, with the same period of experimentation as the present Statute.

I. Nature, Purpose, Name, Government

“The idea behind the Cooperators was this: persons who understand the Pauline Family and are united to it in spirit and intention...”
(From a manuscript of Fr. James Alberione, 11 June 1954).

6. The Association of Pauline Cooperators is a branch of the Pauline Family, founded by Fr. James Alberione and made up of the following Institutions:

- Society of St. Paul
- Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul
- Pious Disciples of the Divine Master
- Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelle Sisters)
- Queen of Apostles Institute for Vocations
- Institutes Aggregated to the Society of St. Paul:
 - Jesus the Priest
 - Our Lady of the Annunciation
 - St. Gabriel the Archangel
 - Holy Family
 - Association of Pauline Cooperators

7. The Association of Pauline Cooperators makes its own the purpose of the Pauline Family, embracing “as externs”—as the Founder put it—all the apostolates of the other Pauline Institutions, as little by little these developed over the years, to the point of integrally living the Gospel in the spirit of St. Paul, under the gaze of Mary, Queen of Apostles, and communicating it to the world with the means that correspond best to the purpose of the individual Congregations: social communications (the specific purpose of the Society of St. Paul and the Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul); the Eucharist, the Priesthood and the Liturgy (the specific purpose of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master); pastoral work in parishes and dioceses (the specific purpose of the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd [Pastorelle Sisters]), the promotion and nurturing of vocations (the specific purpose of the Queen of Apostles Institute for Vocations), as well as openness to other spheres that characterize the consecrated secular life of the Aggregated Pauline Institutes.

8. In conformity with the directives of the Founder, the Association of Pauline Cooperators is entrusted to the care of the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul, whose duty is to verify the conditions for becoming a member of it.

9. Who can be a member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators? Persons who understand the value of the Pauline Family’s mission and want to collaborate in its fulfillment, thus find-

ing a precious opportunity to use their skills to fulfill their Christian vocation and enable the talents they received from the Lord to bear fruit. In welcoming his/her special call, the Cooperator adheres to the Pauline ideal and commits him/herself to incarnating it in daily life according to the directives of the Church, which invites the laity to “share more intensely in the spirituality and mission of various religious Institutes” (*Vita Consecrata*, 54).

II. Formation of the Pauline Cooperator

*“Enrollment in the Cooperators should be preceded—and especially followed up with—suitable instruction. It is certainly a good thing that the faithful want to participate in the 2400 Holy Masses, but this is just one step. They must be enlightened and participate, according to their possibilities, in the Pauline life and works; they must come to understand always more the meaning of true cooperation and carry it out generously” (Fr. Alberione, “Our Cooperators,” in *San Paolo*, April 1951).*

10. It is the duty of each Institution, working in synergy, to promote the formation of the Pauline Cooperator according to the thought of the Founder and the needs of the Church, without losing sight of the Pauline Family as a whole, in keeping with the specific charism of the Institution to which the Cooperator wants to associate him/herself more closely.

11. Consequently, it is the duty of the individual Institutions to draw up their own specific formative *iters*, in view of the integral and permanent formation of the Cooperator, as a continual personal process of maturation in faith and of configuration to Christ, according to the will of the Father, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 57), so as to [help the individual] discover always more clearly his/her particular vocation and be ever more ready to live it in fulfilling his/her mission as a lay person (cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 28, 29b).

12. To be enrolled in the Pauline Cooperators, it is necessary to undergo a two-year period of formation, which concludes with the making of a Promise.

13. Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, St. Paul the Apostle and Mary, Queen of Apostles¹ are the essential points of reference with regard to the spiritual physiognomy of the Pauline Cooperator.

14. The Association of Pauline Cooperators has an official organ of formation-information: *Il Cooperatore Paolino (The Pauline Cooperators Bulletin)*, accessible in digital format on the www.alberione.org website, which contains material provided by the Institutions of the Pauline Family.

¹ The Pauline Cooperators who collaborate with the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelle Sisters) will look to Jesus the Good Shepherd, Way, Truth and Life, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd as their points of reference, including in the formula of the Promise.

III. Forms of Cooperation

“To pray and work for vocations: this is the principal [form of] cooperation. There is the apostolate of the press.... There is the apostolate of the Sacred Liturgy.... There is the pastoral apostolate of the priests and Pastorelle Sisters...” (From a manuscript of Fr. Alberione, 18 Dec. 1965).

15. *Prayer*: this is the most necessary cooperation. It consists in offering personal and communitarian prayers for the diffusion of the Gospel and the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world. The Cooperator cultivates a profound prayer of praise, thanksgiving, reparation and intercession in Christ, and also promotes prayer initiatives in his/her specific environment.

16. *Works*: the Cooperator shares in the work of evangelization of the Pauline Family in the ways possible to him/her, according to his/her aptitudes and the time and means at his/her disposal, in the different apostolates of the individual Pauline Institutions to which he/she is connected.

17. *Offerings*: as a sign of his/her generosity and zeal, the Cooperator freely contributes, according to his/her possibilities, to the apostolic initiatives of the Pauline Family so as to help it reach its goals.

IV. Spiritual Advantages Linked to the Association of Pauline Cooperators

“The two thousand Masses are a tribute of gratitude that the Pious Society of St. Paul offers each year for all the benefactors of the Families of St. Paul” (Fr. Alberione, “Our Cooperators,” in *San Paolo*, April 1951).

18. The Holy See grants all Pauline Cooperators duly enrolled in the Association the opportunity to gain the plenary indulgence on the following feast days:

- Feast of Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life;
- Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ;
- Feast of Mary, Queen of Apostles;
- Feast of the Immaculate Conception;
- Feast of the Assumption;
- Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary;
- Feast of St. Paul the Apostle.²

19. In gratitude to and acknowledgment of the Cooperators, the Society of St. Paul celebrates 2,400 Masses—Perpetual Masses—for them every year and will continue to celebrate them “as

² For the Pauline Cooperators inserted in groups connected to the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelle Sisters), the following feast days are also included: Sts. Peter and Paul; Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd; the 4th Sunday of Easter.

long as it pleases the Lord to keep the Congregation in existence” (Fr. Alberione, Alba, 01.04.1936, “The Cooperators,” in *San Paolo*, n. 24). To enjoy the fruit of the Perpetual Masses, it is necessary that the person’s name be recorded in a register maintained for this purpose, in keeping with the instructions issued by the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul.

V. Organization of the Association of Pauline Cooperators

20. On the *general level*, the structure of the Association of Pauline Cooperators is subdivided as follows:

20.1) The *General Board of Directors* is composed of the Superiors General of the Society of St. Paul, the Daughters of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelle Sisters), and the Queen of Apostles Institute. It is the duty of the General Board of Directors to set down directives concerning the whole Association of Pauline Cooperators, prepare or update its Statutes, ensure that the Directory of each Institute is in harmony with the Statute, provide basic guidelines for the formation of the Association’s members, and convoke international assemblies, choosing the theme, fixing the venue and taking care of its organization.

20.2) The *General Executive Board* is composed of delegates appointed by the Superiors General. These delegates can include several Cooperators chosen by the General Board of Directors at the recommendation of the National Board of Directors.

21. On the *national level*, the structure of the Association of Pauline Cooperators is subdivided as follows:

21.1) The *National Board of Directors* is composed of the circumscription superiors of the Society of St. Paul, the Daughters of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelle Sisters), and the Queen of Apostles Institute present in the country. The National Board of Directors is presided over by turn for a three-year period by one of the superiors that compose it. The Board is to meet at least once a year to inform its members about what was done, coordinate particular initiatives of the Pauline Family on the national level, convoke elective assemblies, and evaluate formation itineraries and the progress of the Cooperators in the individual countries.

21.2) The *National Executive Board* is an organism composed of the delegates of the superiors of the respective Institutions present in the nation. Some Cooperators can be members of the Board. They are chosen by the National Board of Directors and hold this office for a three-year period.

22. International and National General Assemblies of the Pauline Cooperators can be held. These are to be convoked by the General Board of Directors or by the National Board of Directors (cf. 20.1).

VI. How To Become a Pauline Cooperator

“The enrollment document is issued by the individual houses” (Fr. Alberione, “Our Cooperators,” in San Paolo, April 1951).

23. When candidates have completed the required period of formation, they may be admitted to the Association as new Cooperators. The candidate is to present a written request for admission to the Association of Pauline Cooperators. The circumscription superior to whom the [prospective] Cooperator makes reference evaluates the person’s suitability, admits him/her to the Promise and sends the person’s name to the General Board of Directors. The General Board enrolls him/her in the Association and sends the new member a certificate of membership.

24. Cooperators are admitted to the Association during a Liturgical Celebration, in the presence of a circumscription superior. The following Promise is to be made:

Lord my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
who called me to be a Pauline Cooperator,
grant that in imitation of St. Paul the Apostle,
I may acquire a vibrant sense of Christ.
I intend to commit my mind, will, heart and physical strength,
according to my particular state of life,
to the proclamation and diffusion of the Gospel
in the forms and in the spirit of the Pauline Family,
for the greater glory of God,
my sanctification and that of my brothers and sisters.
May Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life,
Mary, Queen of Apostles
and St. Paul the Apostle
help me to be faithful. Amen.

25. The new Cooperator is to be given a copy of the Statutes and Directory (and also the Rules, where these exist) of the Cooperators, together with the emblem of the Pauline Family.

26. The Patronal Feast of the Pauline Cooperators is that of St. Paul the Apostle, which is celebrated by the Pauline Family on 30 June.